

# Henry Chew Gaither (1751-1811)

**Ensign, First Maryland Regiment, 1776**

**Second Lieutenant, First Maryland Regiment, 1776**

**Captain, First Maryland Regiment, 1776-1780**

**Captain, Fourth Maryland Regiment, 1781-1783**

**Captain, First Maryland Regiment, 1783**

**Major, U.S. Army First Regiment, 1791-1792**

**Lieutenant Colonel Commandant, Third Sub-Legion, 1793-1802**

Henry Chew Gaither Sr., a revolutionary war officer, was born in 1751, likely in Anne Arundel County. He was born to Martha (Ridgely) Gaither and Henry Gaither, taking his middle name from his grandmother Sarah Chew Burgess, to a family with twelve siblings. [1] When Gaither's father died in 1780, he passed his land to all of his children. [2] Gaither, along with his brother, William, and his mother Martha, was an executor of his father's will, which bestowed Gaither's Forest to him, divided with his brother Beale. [3] Gaither was never married but later in his life he became the legal guardian of numerous young relatives. [4]

Gaither's lifelong military service began during the Revolutionary War. He was an ensign in Gen. [Smallwood](#)'s Maryland regiment in early 1776 and a second Lieutenant later that year. [5] From 1776 until 1780, he was captain of the second company in the First Maryland Regiment. [6]

Gaither participated in the Battle of Brooklyn where, as the British Parliament's *Annual Register* [described it](#), "almost a whole regiment from Maryland...of young men from the best families in the country was cut to pieces" but drew men closer together. [7] At the Battle of Brooklyn, the First Maryland Regiment, especially companies led by [Barton Lucas](#), [Daniel Bowie](#), [Peter Adams](#), [Benjamin Ford](#), and [Edward Veazey](#), later called the Maryland 400, held off the British while the rest of the Continental Army escaped Long Island to safety. He served in numerous Revolutionary War battles at Cowpens (1781), Guilford Courthouse (1781), and others the First Maryland Regiment participated in, but not Monmouth, along with spending winter in Morristown. [8] After the First Maryland Regiment was decimated at the battle of Camden (1780), from 1781 to 1783 he was captain in the Fourth Regiment. [9] He returned to the First Regiment in early 1783 to the end of the war. [10]

Following the Revolutionary War, he was a founding member of the Society of Cincinnati's chapter in Maryland. [11] This society was, originally, an Americanized version of a European fraternal order for Continental Army officers, fully voluntary and hereditary, to reminisce or bond over shared war stories, but it also had a political agenda to pressure states and Congress to honor their promises to officers, and promoted national honor, and the "future dignity of the American empire" as its constitution stated. [12]

Gaither stayed with the military in later years. He served in the U.S. Army First Regiment as a major from 1791 to 1792, and then became a Lieutenant Colonel Commandant, commanding troops on rivers such as the Oconee in Georgia, the following year. [13] In his military capacity, he served as a major on the Western frontier, leading a "battalion of levies" in 1791, and fighting during the campaign of Arthur

St. Clair, governor of the Northwest Territory, including St. Clair's Defeat, against indigenous groups such as the Potawatomi, Ottawa, and Chippewa. [14] While he did not participate in the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794, the government, in the words of one obituary, solicited his "usefulness against Indians upon our frontier," especially in Georgia. [15] Still, one of his officers who opposed him described Gaither as an "ignorant, debauched, unprincipled old bachelor" who appeared "willing to purest character to gratify the spleen of his soul," and some claim, in league with land speculators. [16] Gaither continued to serve in the military and was honorably discharged in 1802. [17] He also served as a witness to treaties with the Creeks [in 1796](#) and Choctaw [in 1801](#).

When he was not fighting in combat, Gaither settled down at a plantation in Georgetown. This property had a three-story Georgian style brick house, larger than the typical houses of that time. [18] From the 1780s to the early 1800s, he rented land to other occupants, sold farm animals, purchased land, and much more, some of which he did with his brother Ephraim. [19] He was a well-off plantation owner and landowner, as his will shows he owned property in Washington D.C., the Eastern Branch of the Potomac, Montgomery County, Alleghany County, and the Northwest Territory along with a small number of enslaved blacks, as did numerous other members of his immediate family such as his brother Ephraim. [20] He also had two land bounty warrants, which were issued to Revolutionary War veterans, in the hundreds of acres. [21] His farm in Montgomery County had, according to land sales after his death, an apple orchard and nursery, a barn, stables, servant's quarters, and a huge brick house. [22]

Henry C. Gaither died in Georgetown, within the present-day District of Columbia, on June 25, 1811 at 61 years old. [23] He was honored in a funeral procession including citizens of nearby towns, local government officials, clergy, physicians, and military officers. [24] The procession also consisted of a firing property of marines commanded by Capt. William Henderson, who also served on the frontier, members of a company of volunteer cavalry led by Captain John Peter, pall bearers, a marine band, heads of Federal Government Departments, and much more. [25] There is no doubt that at his death he was well honored by people within the military and different levels of government.

- *Burkely Hermann, Maryland Society of the Sons of American Revolution Research Fellow, 2016.*

#### Notes

[1] Will of Henry Gaither; Newman, *Anne Arundel Gentry: A Geneological History of Some Early Families of Anne Arundel County, Maryland*; Vol. One, 90, 98-99; Newman, *Anne Arundel Gentry: A Geneological History of Some Early Families of Anne Arundel County, Maryland*; Vol. Two, 93, 103.

[2] Will of Henry Gaither; Newman, *Anne Arundel Gentry*; Vol. One, 99-100.

[3] Will of Henry Gaither; Newman, *Anne Arundel Gentry*; Vol. One, 100.

[4] Newman, *Anne Arundel Gentry*; Vol. One, 93; *Marriages and Deaths from Baltimore Newspapers, 1796-1816*, 120; *Maryland Marriages, 1634-1777*, 66; *Maryland Marriages 1778-1800*, 78; *Marriages and Deaths from the Maryland Gazette, 1727-1839*, 65; *Marriage Licenses Montgomery County, Maryland, 1798-1898*.

- [5] *Archives of Maryland Online* Vol 47, [page 34](#); *Proceedings of the Conventions of the Province of Maryland*, 92; *Archives of Maryland Online* Vol. 12, [page 16](#).
- [6] Revolutionary War Rolls, 1775-1783 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M246). War Department Collection of Revolutionary War Records, Record Group 93; National Archives, Washington, D.C.; *Archives of Maryland*, Vol. 43, page 154.
- [7] Tacyn, "'To the End': The First Maryland Regiment and the American Revolution," 4.
- [8] *Archives of Maryland Online* Vol. 43, [page 154](#); Pension of Richard Mudd. NARA M804. Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant Application Files. Record Group 15. Roll 1786. Pension Number: W. 8,476. Pages 47-53. Fold 3.com; [Pension Application of Richard Mudd](#) W8476 via Southern Campaigns Revolutionary War Pension Statements and Rosters at revapps.org; Knostom, *Guilford Courthouse 1781*, 81-82; Howard and Babits, *Long, Obstinate, and Bloody*, 69; *The United States Infantry: An Illustrated History, 1775-1918*, 17; Heitman, *Historical Register of U.S. Army* Vol. 1, 442.
- [9] Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the U.S. Army*; Vol. 1, 442.
- [10] *The Writing of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources 1745-1799*; Vol. 14, 35, 112;
- [11] Boyd, *The History of Montgomery County, Maryland*, 58; Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*; Vol. 1, 643; *The Debates and Proceedings of the United States Tenth Congress--First Session*, 626; Steuart, *The Maryland Line*, 167-168.
- [12] Fowler Jr., *American Crisis: George Washington and the Dangerous Two Years After Yorktown 1781-1783*, 206-207.
- [13] Heitman, *Historical Register of U.S. Army* Vol. 1, 85, 442; *Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1762- 1763* (part of *Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Soldiers Who Served from 1784 to 1811*). National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). Washington, D.C.; Record Group 94. Series Number M905; Roll Number 3; Carpenter, *The Trial of Col. Aaron Burr on an Incitement for Treason*, 324.
- [14] Gaff, *Bayonets in the Wilderness: Anthony Wayne's Legion in the Old Northwest*, 4, 35; *Journal of the Executive Proceedings of the Senate of the United States of America*; Vol. 1, 117; Heath, *William Wells and the Struggle for the Old Northwest*, 149.
- [15] Gaff, *Bayonets in the Wilderness*, 4, 35, 304; Newman, *Anne Arundel Gentry*; Vol. 1, 100; June 29, 1811, *Federal Republican Commercial Gazette*, Baltimore; June 9, 1791, *City Gazette*, Charleston; July 7, 1791, *Wood's Newark Gazette*, Newark; *The Debates and Proceedings of the United States Tenth Congress--First Session*, 670.
- [16] Gaff, *Bayonets in the Wilderness*, 47; Lewis, "A re-analysis of the causes of the war of 1812," 591; Leckie, *From Sea to Shining Sea*, 99; Ticker, *Down like Thunder*, 349; Whipple, *To the shores of Tripoli*, 325.

[17] Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the U.S. Army*; Vol. 1, 85, 139-140, 442; *The West Point Orderly Books*; Volumes I-IV, 113; Miller, "How Whiskey Almost Started A War."

[18] "Valuable Property for Sale," Jan. 28, 1813, *Daily National Intelligencer*, Washington, D.C.

[19] For some examples see: Leasing land from Hugh Anderson; Deed, William Marbury to Henry Chew Gaither; and Mortgage requested by Henry Chew Gaither.

[20] Will of Henry Chew Gaither; Assessments of 1793, 1795, 1796 and 1797, Montgomery County Commissioners of the Tax, Assessment Record, MdHR 20015-1-1, p. 115-116, 159, 228, 256, 268 (MSA C1110-1, 1/18/14/17); Assessments of 1813 and 1816, Montgomery County Commissioners of the Tax, Assessment Record, MdHR 20015-3-1, p. 53, 99, 130 (MSA C1110-3, 1/18/14/19); Assessments of 1798, 1801, 1802, 1804, 1811, Montgomery County Commissioners of the Tax, Assessment Record, MdHR 20015-2-1, p. 94, 33, 138, 146, 151, 163, 205, 265, 406, 424 (MSA C1110-2, 1/18/14/18); General Assembly House of Delegates, Assessment Records, 1783, 3-4, 18 (MSA S1161-78, 1/4/5/51).

[21] Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty Land Warrant Application Files (NARA microfilm publication M804). Records of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Record Group 15. National Archives, Washington, D.C.; Smith, *Federal Land Series*; Vol. 401, 522, 835.

[22] "Valuable property for sale," Jan. 28, 1813, *Daily National Intelligencer*, Washington, D.C.; "The Real Estate of the Late Col. Henry Gaither," May 5, 1814, *Federal Republican Commercial Gazette*, Baltimore; July 8, 1815, *Daily National Intelligencer*, Washington D.C.; "Public Sale," January 11, 1816, *Daily National Intelligencer*, Washington D.C.

[23] *Marriages and Deaths from Baltimore Newspapers, 1796-1816*, 120; June 27, 1811, *Federal Republican and Commercial Gazette*, Baltimore; Estate of Henry Chew Gaither.

[24] Orphans Court Proceedings, 1811; June 27, 1811, *Federal Republican and Commercial Gazette*, Baltimore.

[25] See letters mentioning William Henderson [in the War Department Papers](#).

<http://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc3500/sc3520/016700/016748/html/16748bio.html>